

Kent State University
College of Education, Health, and Human Services
External Review Team Report

External Review Team Members:

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We are grateful for the opportunity to provide an external review of the College of Education, Health, and Human Services (EHHS). Without question, EHHS is at a pivotal juncture in its history as the College faces a number of challenges, including, but not limited to:

- A multi-million dollar deficit;
- The complexity of a Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget model versus a traditional incremental budget model;
- Their status as a recently reorganized College that has not yet fully unified, especially since the provost's office explicitly asked reviewers to consider whether the college currently is organized effectively
- A lengthy interim leadership gap between two permanent deans;
- A temporary restriction on personnel adjustments that requires a demonstration of salary savings even when EHHS-generated funds are available;
- A changing overall mission of the University to emphasize research more strongly without an accompanying injection of resources.

Given these challenges, our comprehensive review of the self-study report, and our findings from an on-campus review, we offer the following suggestions organized by category:

Financial Issues:

- EHHS must subscribe to the following reality on a College-wide basis: In order to start doing "x", we must stop doing "y". Current resource allocations simply do not allow adding programming/services without sustainable resources to cover those programs/services derived from concluding or ending other programming/services.
- We recommend calculating profit and loss by program to start discussions about financial sustainability with appropriate consideration of a "double bottom line" analysis that considers BOTH fiscal viability and programmatic necessity.
- Flexible workloads for all post-tenure and non-tenure-track faculty should be considered to align faculty talents and demonstrated expertise with work outcomes including; consideration of a "2-factor" model of faculty workload assignments that considers number of courses and number of students as well as offering fractional course credit for doctoral student supervision.

- KSU might examine the ratio of non-tenure track (NTT) faculty to TT faculty currently in all programs. In addition, it is also important to note that salaries for NTT are far below their TT counterparts. This creates a significant morale issue.
- In order to be competitive with peers and compete for high quality graduate students, KSU might consider raising the stipend. Moreover, the Graduate Assistant allocation formula needs adjustment to ensure GA resources are targeted and maximized.
- Consider hiring more NTT faculty to teach undergraduates. Currently, many undergraduate teaching slots are filled by part-time adjuncts, potentially diluting program quality. Converting some of those adjunct positions into full time NTT faculty positions will help allocations of service load and maintenance of quality teaching.
- Consider enhancing the resources devoted to and strategies focused on development/enhancement.

Online Education:

- EHHS must adopt a student-centered strategy to drive all decisions regarding online programming (i.e., online programs must be driven by student needs in order to be successful). Currently, the faculty reflected to us an attitude that online classes are simply preferred by the university because they are online.
- We recommend that KSU prioritize fully online programs over the conversion of individual classes to online and prioritize master's degree programs over undergraduate programs.
- Reserve the conversion of undergraduate courses to online for special circumstances (e.g., summer semester, mini-terms, to ensure timely graduation during the senior year, etc.)
- Solicit start-up funding from provost's office for new online programs (e.g., provost office could commit to funding 100% of a new online faculty member for year 1, 66% for year 2, and 33% for year 3 with EHHS picking up the remainder each year).
- Develop and integrate a strategic model for the training of faculty to become proficient in online pedagogy
- Consider requiring faculty who teach online to earn online instructional faculty credentialing
- It is unclear whether the current climate in Ohio will support a large new undertaking of online programs. We would recommend a full market analysis and working to differentiate KSU degree offerings online from others. The online doctorate in "leadership" currently sounds like it may be unique.

Organizational Structure Issues:

- Some faculty feel the FLA school is comprised of mismatched programs.
- While the most recent restructuring was driven primarily by the effort to equalize the number of students in each school, future tweaks to this structure should be driven by the potential for synergy between individual programs and potential host schools.
- Conversations about revisions to the current EHHS organizational must focus on the principle that "organizational form must follow organizational function."
- There did not seem to be any structural impediments in the current organizational structure to school performance. We surmise that issues of representation raised by the Provost's office have more to do with communication than obvious organizational structure issues.

Communication/Marketing:

- Because there has been a relatively large gap in consistent leadership, there seems to have been opportunities for programs/schools to develop different and sometimes competing priorities. A common vision for EHHS is needed and consistent repetition of this vision will be required so that everyone can be on the same page.
- The EHHS communication office is severely understaffed – one person.
 - o In our experience, a college of this size needs at least 3 full-time staff to support internal/external communication strategies.
 - o EHHS has great stories of community engagement and impact that the KSU President needs to know about so that legislators and taxpayers can see the benefit of their support of the university. These stories can influence how KSU is perceived and funded
 - o EHHS should consider a monthly email with highlights of what is going on in the College, and a larger communication team could assemble such messages
 - Emphasize unifying messages that are cross-disciplinary
 - College will move in the direction of compliments and highlighted programs/activities
 - It is important to stay forward looking (avoid artifacts from the past)
- Consider developing a comprehensive marketing plan for EHHS academic programs and commit resources as necessary to support the plan

Student Services:

- Assess VACCA services, programs structure, and staffing. The office presently is focused on many activities outside traditional student advising and these may want to be continued, but they may also need to be specified in a team member's duties. In other words, instead of being an advisory and running international programs, the college may want to put all international program responsibilities under one person who would not act as an advisor.
- Consider new models for student advising that differentiate according to student need (e.g., FTIC students have different needs than successful honors students).
- More effectively integrate technology (e.g., make answers to frequently asked questions available online 24/7/365) and group advising so that 1:1 advising is reserved for special circumstances. Some of the constraints to these decisions will be financial and ratios (number of advisors to students) consistent with national recommendations.

Staff Issues:

- Staff would significantly benefit from the initiation of a technology replacement plan for work computers and equipment. This is a small, but important and visible move to improve staff morale.
- Consider establishing a Staff Council in EHHS to improve communication and staff voice in EHHS future.
- Staff seem interested in working together as teams across schools to improve business processes. This might be a valuable resource.

Research Support:

- Examine the effectiveness of targeted research hire program that requires prospective candidate to possess transferable federal funding. If program is ineffective, consider using funds for support and development of current KSU faculty.
- Consider model and structure for the support of the generation of faculty research/scholarship and associated external support, as contrasted with pre-award and post-award administration.
- Develop financial incentives for research activity (e.g., research awards).
- Ensure tenure and promotion guidelines adequately incentivize research activity.
- Consider the appropriate amount for a faculty member to buyout from teaching to conduct research. If 40% of one's workload is teaching, and one is assigned to teach 5 classes to meet that workload, 8% might be the appropriate buyout, not 12.5%.